

THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
GANDHI

M. D. JAPHETH

2nd
EDITION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FOOL'S PARADISE

The revolt of a conscience

WE WILL SMILE AGAIN

A story of the Jewish people

THE PRICE OF PEACE

An essay of our times

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Exactly four years ago, when the first edition of this little book was presented to the reading public, the expressed purpose and object was "to rescue the subject of Gandhi and Gandhism from beneath the debris of conflicting thoughts and theories and to analyse it in the light of truth" Today, this purpose and this object have assumed even greater importance, for never in the history of Gandhi or Gandhism have there been so many conflicting thoughts and theories about a being who despite the apparent immunities of age, remains the world's number one headline personality Indeed, so profound and fundamental is the influence of Gandhism in all aspects of India's national existence, that to understand any of these aspects an exhaustive study of Gandhi is vital and essential

A great deal has transpired since this publication first reached the hand of its reader Much blood and tears have flowed beneath the bridge of Time Today, more than ever before, Gandhi Gandhism and their manifold implications are common topics in every home and in every meeting-place Whether as saint or sinner, mystic or politician, realist or idealist, radical or anarchist, Gandhi is always NEWS And if this book will help the reader to determine just how and why Gandhism compels his attention and interest, then indeed it may be presumed that the controversy that revolves around the subject will to some measure have been dissolved

The historian will surely record that the world today

is passing through a most unenviable stage. This not merely because death and destruction stalk every land but because man's even greater enemy, DOUBT, with its resultant loss of faith and confidence, is swaying the mind of men. The question current everywhere is, "after the sound and fury of battle WHAT?" Where, in what dark spot hidden, is the light that will ultimately guide the weary and foosore to the great Truth? From whence will come man's salvation? All that we held dear and inviolable but a few years ago have been dissipated by the smoke and gas of a world in flames. The values and virtues of our forgotten yesterdays are no more today. What then must one do? What believe? And if we are to believe, who the prophet, what the symbol that will inspire and rekindle faith in a degenerated and demoralised humanity?

In an age that is inundated with isms of all shapes and fancies, is it possible that the student of life may detect in Gandhism the answer to some at least, of the queries that plague men's mind today? Is it possible that in this physically frail personality there is that grandeur of human worth, that ageless potentiality, that will put to shame man's loudly proclaimed self assertion and material obsessed realism? Is it possible that in Gandhism the world will find its quest, which in effect will constitute a reversal of past and present formulae?

Whatever be the case there is none who can dispute the fact that as a challenge Gandhism represents the first requisite to salvation. Well might the truth seeker stop and consider by the side of this significant personality who today holds the destiny of millions in his hands.

Who is Gandhi? What is Gandhism? What is its inherent strength, and how does it operate? These are some of the questions that are in vogue today, and these are some of the questions that this publication humbly seeks to answer.

It is the author's fond hope that the reader will render his little attempt a patient hearing, and then consult his conscience to determine whether or not the world today is yearning for the reassuring message of Gandhi and Gandhism.

BOMBAY,
JUNE, 1944

In this world of wars and strife, hatred and vengeance, jealousy and fear, where all seems ugliness and horror, there is yet a Beauty Triumphant. Few men know this Power, fewer see it. For those who find it, tend it and bequeath it as a golden gift to blood smeared humanity, there is everlasting glory.

Several elements manifest this Beauty and Grandeur of the Divine. Nature's canvass contains a multitude of things that are joys for ever. Man, God's most potential creation, is sometimes also a thing of beauty, grander by far than the roses of the field and the birds of the air because he himself is articulate and creative. Millions like these tread the by-ways and alley-ways of life unknown. Denied the limelight through circumstances alone, they yet constitute the salvation army that leads, perhaps drags us to the light and the truth.

All men, in common with other planes of creation, are impelled by a common urge and passion to create, extend, conquer. This instinct of movement and action assumes several forms. A Napoleon or a Caesar rides at

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the head of conquering hordes and writes his deeds and acts with human blood These seek new horizons and find perdition and damnation To them the inner urge is a traitor Others, actuated by the same basic instinct, find their vocation in happier fields and express the self same urge with sublime deeds of love and mercy that encircle the earth like a silver cord

Each man is a symbol—a material expression of an infinitely higher Power, and each man lives and works to serve his time and purpose Socrates lived and taught when Greece was the repository of materialism and bondage Moses ascended Sinai when Pharaoh made virtues of idolatory and persecution Christ preached his Sermon On The Mount when Caesar sought to extend his iron heel over the entire world, to crush beneath its dead weight all the forces of truth and justice and peace Thus proceeds the age long contest, with self force arrayed against brute force Today, when "civilised" nations are besmearing the banners of truth and liberty and justice, a little figure in loincloth illuminates India as the Sentinel and Crusader of our time This is Mahatma Gandhi, the physical symbol of all that is beautiful and sublime in human nature

The story of Gandhi is the story that has been told thousands of years ago, it is also the story that will be told thousands of years hence, for it is the story of Man

and his Great Journey towards the Ultimate Destiny To a war weary violence-ridden unhappy world however it is not the story but rather the message and significance thereof that is of importance and value and it is this message and this significance that this book is primarily intended and designed to portray

As a preliminary for the benefit of the uninformed it is perhaps necessary to sketch the life story of Gandhi in barest outline His complete name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and he was born on October 2nd 1869 in the town of Porbander in a little state situated in North Western India His parents were orthodox Hindus and he was reared in an atmosphere of great piety At 12 he was married and when 19 he sailed for England for studies in law Three years later he returned to India and commenced his legal practise In 1893 he went to South Africa on an important case and thus the curtain rose on the Great Drama that has made history for he immediately associated himself with and helped to organise the agitation of the South African Indians against the misrule of the Government there Having steeped himself in the doctrines of Christ Tolstoy Thoreau Ruskin etc he championed the rights of his countrymen armed with a unique weapon For twenty years the contest raged until ultimately soul force prevailed against brute force and Gandhi and the cause he had espoused triumphed The Motherland was

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justly proud of her now famous son, and when Gandhi set foot again on native soil, he was virtually robed in the mantle of a leader. Once in India, the Great Experiment commenced anew, and he began the mighty task of liberating a nation from an oppressive rule with a method that has astounded the world.

What is this method? When and how does it operate? What, if any, are its benefits? What will it achieve for India and the world? What are the character, principles and purpose of Gandhi, its author? For the better elucidation and comprehension of the answers to these questions, the following letter, written by Gandhi to H R H the Duke of Connaught in connection with the boycott of the latter's visit to India in 1921, is important —

Sir,

Your Royal Highness must have heard a great deal about non-co operation non-co operationists and their methods, and, incidentally, of me, its humble author. I fear that the information given Your Royal Highness must have been in its nature one-sided. I owe it to you, to my friends and myself, that I should place before you what I

conceive to be the scope of non-co-operation, as followed not only by me, but by my closest associates, such as Messrs Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali

For me it is no joy and pleasure to be actively associated in the boycott of Your Royal Highness' visit I have tendered loyal, voluntary assistance to the Government for an unbroken period of nearly 30 years in the full belief that through that lay the path of freedom for my country It was, therefore, no slight thing for me to suggest to my country-men that we should take no part in welcoming Your Royal Highness Not one amongst us has anything against you as an English gentleman We hold your person as sacred as that of a dearest friend I do not know any of my friends who would not guard it with his life if he found it in danger

We are not at war with individual Englishmen We seek not to

destroy English life. We do desire to destroy the system that has emasculated our country in body, mind and soul. We are determined to battle with all our might against that English nature which has made O'Dwyerism and Dyerism possible in the Punjab and has resulted in a wanton affront upon Islam, a faith professed by seven crores of our countrymen. We consider it inconsistent with our self-respect any longer to brook the spirit of superiority and dominance which has systematically ignored and disregarded the sentiments of thirty crores of innocent people of India on many a vital matter. It is humiliating to us. It cannot be a matter of pride to you that thirty crores of Indians should live day in and day out in fear of their life from one hundred thousand Englishmen and, therefore, be under subjection to them.

Your Royal Highness has come, not to end the system I described, but to sustain it by upholding its

prestige Your first pronouncement was a laudation of Lord Willingdon I have the privilege of knowing him I believe him to be an honest amiable gentleman who will not willingly hurt even a fly but he certainly failed as a ruler He allowed himself to be guided by those whose interest it was to support their power He is not reading the mind of the Dravidian provinces Here in Bengal you are issuing a certificate of merit to a Governor who is again from all I have heard an estimable gentleman but who knows nothing of the heart of Bengal and its yearnings Bengal is not Calcutta Fort William and the palaces of Calcutta represent an insolent exultation of the unmurmuring and highly cultured peasantry of this fair province

The non co operationists have come to the conclusion that they must not be deceived by the reforms that tinker with the problem of India's distress and humiliation nor must they be impatient and angry

We must not in our impatient anger resort to stupid violence. We freely admit that we must take our due share of blame for the existing state. It is not so much British guns that are responsible for our subjection as our voluntary co-operation.

Our non-co-operation in a hearty welcome to Your Royal Highness is thus in no sense a demonstration against your high personage, but it is against the system you come to uphold. I know individual Englishmen cannot, even if they will, alter the English nature all of a sudden. If we would be the equals of Englishmen, we must cast off fear. We must learn to be self-reliant and independent of schools, courts, protection, and patronage of a Government we seek to end, if it will not mend.

Hence this non-violent non-co-operation. I know we have not all yet become non-violent in speech and deed, but the results so far achieved have, I assure Your Royal

Highness been amazing. The people have understood the secret and value of non violence as they have never done before. He who will may see that this is a religious purifying movement. We are leaving off drink. We are trying to rid India of the curse of untouchability. We are trying to throw off foreign tinsel splendour and by reverting to the spinning wheel reviving the ancient and poetic simplicity of life. We hope thereby to sterilize the existing harmful institutions.

I ask Your Royal Highness as an Englishman to study this movement and its possibilities for the Empire and the world. We are at war with nothing that is good in the world. In protecting Islam in the manner we are we are protecting all religions in protecting the honour of India we are protecting the honour of humanity. For our means are hurtful to none. We desire to live on terms of friend ship with Englishmen but that friendship must be friendship

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of equals both in theory and in practice, and we must continue to non co operate ~~so~~ to purify ourselves till the goal is achieved. I ask Your Royal Highness, and through you every Englishman to appreciate the view-point of non co operation.

I beg to remain
Your Royal Highness'
Faithful Servant
M K GANDHI

From the foregoing it may be deduced that Gandhi is a leader of a nation striving for liberty and justice. It is also apparent—and this is of paramount importance—that the means towards this end are uncompromisingly those of peace. Thus the essential principles of Gandhism are justice and peace, which in turn may explicitly be explained to be justice with peace and peace with justice. Here we encounter the triple-edged weapon of non violence, non co operation and renunciation, one of which is more or less interconnected with the other. This is the weapon in Gandhi's armoury, a weapon the potentialities of which it will be interesting to examine, and which, if proved effective and consummate, will constitute one of the most priceless contributions towards the realisation of human ideals.

This weapon is by no means new or original. It is a weapon that conquers not by force but by love, and was fashioned in the holy precincts of Calvary. Yet in an age that is only nominally Christian it languishes in rust. Gandhi however brandishes it anew before the astonished gaze of man who understands not easily its nature or scope.

Gandhi's creed of non violence is strongly coloured by his staunch Hinduism. It has been reinforced by the teachings of Tolstoy and the Sermon On The Mount. It therefore possesses a catholic appeal and is of universal interest. Nor is Gandhi the man any less universal in nature and policy. He is a Hindu merely by accident for his creed is primarily and basically humanitarian and incidentally national. I am wedded to India, he states, because I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. My religion has no geographical limits. I have a living faith in it which will transcend even my love for India herself. Gandhi is necessarily a patriot but his patriotism is the deep-rooted ideal of democracy which conceives humanity to be unfettered not merely from the chains of autocracy but also from the vices and vilifying elements that debase the status of man and subordinate his divine attributes. To Gandhi therefore India is merely his scene of action the stage on which he enacts the mighty drama of truth and justice, and love and peace. His audience is the entire

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world applauding at every rise and fall of the curtain
for India's political emancipation is a symbol of humanity's moral regeneration

Some schools of thought decry Gandhi's association with politics declaring that as a saint he cannot and should not assume the guise of a politician. These schools of thought betray a gross ignorance of one of Gandhi's greatest values and services as a politician for by introducing moral values and methods in the India rubber nature of politics he has made it possible for humanity to determine the course of politics rather than vice versa. To use his own words men say that I am a saint losing himself in politics. The fact is that I am a politician trying my hardest to become a saint. Most religious men I have met with are politicians in disguise. I, who wear the garb of a politician am at heart a religious man.

The world today is victimised by politics and politicians suffering from a poverty of moral and spiritual attributes. Their language of expression is the language of the bomb and the bayonet. In the society of individuals the operation of legal institutions seeks to deter criminal actions and to ensure recognised and approved standards of justice and fairplay. When one man destroys another it is conceived to be a human and a legal transgression one for which the evil-doer deserves

and receives his just punishment. But when one nation destroys another it is conceived to be a human crime but no legal deterrent is enforced for *international crimes are politics*. For Gandhi however politics are subservient to justice and morality and a religious victory is acceptable even at the cost of a political defeat. His application of the law governing the relationship of individuals to that of nations is thus a distinct and unique contribution towards international goodwill and universal peace for it is of vital importance that politics be purified by religion rather than religion be stained with politics. How Gandhi himself combines and tempers the two is colourfully illustrated by his unhesitatingly suspending political undertakings and agitations for religious reasons which are perhaps best explained in his own words —

I know that the drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound. The country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error. The only virtue I want to claim is truth and non violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same

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corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wear and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections

For confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner and brighter. I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper by the retracing. Never has a man reached his destination by persistance in deviation from the straught path. It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. I have no doubt whatso ever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food so will the eighty of Bardoli prove unacceptable

by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli. Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. *In civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for nude suffering.* Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index figure. It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace and not think of starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass civil disobedience being started and in spite of government precaution.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation and so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God.

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On more than one occasion did Gandhi consider it necessary to retrace his steps and suspend his campaign To cry a halt to a nation of teeming millions on the march towards its avowed goal of national independence is no small matter, yet Gandhi's decisions have always prevailed, and the Great Procession has stayed its steps Some of his followers, however, not comprehending the subtle implications of his motives, have questioned his generalship and strayed from his ranks At the moment these lines are being penned however India faces yet another crisis and is on the eve of another national struggle Now it is that the entire country is flocking unhesitatingly towards Gandhi's banner and all are girding themselves for the mighty Effort under his supreme leadership *To India at any rate, Gandhi and Gandhism are indispensable*

To the representative Western mind, Gandhi is an enigma His institutional loin-cloth and spinning wheel appear to be pathetically primitive and tragically inadequate as weapons for national self realisation So be it Yet, to appraise Gandhism on the basis of Western civilisation and doctrines and conventional formulae is a totally mistaken procedure, for Gandhi belongs to the select group of mortals which transcends the material plane and views life from a spiritual altitude This, apparently, is his weakness, actually it is his strength for in this role he practices non violence

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not as an expedient but an absolute principle. He is thus an uncompromising adherent of truth and love, and to him so called failure is but a form of success. Armed with means that are true and just, the realisation of the end is but a matter of time.

The perspective in which he is viewed by Western thought is strikingly portrayed by Lord Halifax, one of India's former Viceroys who held office during one of the country's most intense national struggles when he states that 'Gandhi appeals to the deep forces in Hinduism of which we know little and he leads his followers into realms of thought where we can hardly follow. His onslaught on Western materialism strikes a responsive chord in Hindu hearts even though the hum of his spinning wheel sounds faintly against the feverberation of the mill and by reason of Mr Gandhi's devotion to ideals and readiness to impose and to accept any sacrifice that he can convince himself is calculated to forward the single purpose, his power over his Hindu followers differs in kind from that of any other, and as often as he cares to stir them, so often will vast numbers of them respond partly, however through temperament, and often perhaps through circumstances, Mr Gandhi has repeatedly disappointed many of his warmest friends by his failure hitherto to evolve, and win support for,

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a considered and constructive policy. Here is one of the major tragedies of the Indian situation.

Perhaps the above description will bear interesting comparison with these pronouncements on Gandhi by his distinguished countryman and contemporary, the late Rabindranath Tagore — 'I am amazed at the effectiveness of his humanity. An ascetic himself, he does not frown on the joys of others, but works for the enlivening of their existence day and night. He exalts poverty in his own life but no man in India has striven more assiduously than he for the material welfare of his people. A reformer with the zeal of a revolutionary, he imposes severe restraints on the very passions he provokes. Something of an idolator and also an iconoclast, he leaves the old gods in their dusty niches of sanctity and simply lures the old worship to better and more human purposes. Professing his adherence to the caste system he launches his firmest attack against it where it keeps its strongest guards and yet has hardly suffered from popular disapproval as would have been the case with a lesser man who would be much less effective in his efforts. Here, I said to myself, is a truly great man. For he is greater even than the creed he professes. Great as he is as a politician, as an organiser, as a leader of the people, as a moral reformer, he is greater than all these as a man because none of these aspects and activities limits

his humanity. They are rather inspired and sustained by it. Though an *incorrigible* idealist and given to referring all conduct to certain pet formulae of his own, he is essentially a lover of men and not of mere ideas, which makes him so cautious and conservative in his revolutionary schemes. If he proposes to carry out an experiment for society, he must first subject himself to the ordeal. If he calls for a sacrifice he must first pay its price himself. While many socialists wait for all to be deprived of their privileges before they would part with theirs, this man first renounces before he ventures to make any claims on the renunciation of others.'

The subject of Gandhi and Gandhism is admittedly of a very controversial nature. Living as we do in an age when propaganda and falsified values render truth a multi-coloured commodity and present it in many forms, it is vitally necessary to separate the gold from the dust and to perceive realities in the light of analysis rather than of information. It is in this light only that an impartial and dispassionate study of Gandhi is possible. Gandhism is more than a creed, *it is an art*. We cannot merely observe it, we must cultivate it for it represents a complete mastery of the art of living in harmony with the forces of nature and the laws of God and Man. Tagore the artist therefore perhaps comprehends Gandhi more than Halifax the

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politician To the latter, Gandhi as a politician is not a complete success, because he has, in his opinion, failed "to evolve, and win support for, a considered and constructive policy" What, one may ask, is "a considered and constructive policy"? Gandhi's goal is national independence for India That is his end His means are non-violent non co-operation What could be more considered or constructive? Finding the end nowhere in view Lord Halifax discredits the means, perhaps ignorant of the fact that *to Gandhi non-violence is not merely a means but an end in itself*, an absolute principle the practice of which is virtual victory and liberty What, one may ask again, is liberty, and what would constitute success in the Indian Struggle? Would it be wise or expedient for Gandhi to lead his country to so called freedom by wading through the blood of slain rulers and proclaiming a reign of violence and terror? And if India did attain "freedom" with these blood stained methods, could she retain it? Would it be worth retaining? These are questions to which answers on this page would be superfluous, for history screams her warning to all who may hear, and current events reverberate the cry The message is clear Gandhi has heard it, and he knows that *India has more liberty and national consciousness striving for freedom with non-violence than she would have if she actually would attain it with violence* "The struggle," he says, "is for a sacred principle And for it, in spite of all difficulties, we must be prepared to die, if need be We

have chosen our remedy. It is that of fighting evil by opposing to it good. Such suffering is a process of purification. It involves a continual rejection of the grosser elements and a cultivation of the finer in us. Thus viewed the prolongation of the struggle need not dismay us we may even welcome it. Victory consists not in obtaining what we want but in having suffered for the attainment of our object. The fulfilment will not be victory, it will merely be an indication (thereof). For those who recognise this simple truth there is no such thing as defeat. Every man has in his power to suffer to the uttermost. And this is the meaning of passive resistance.

In all his dealings Gandhi takes guidance from his conscience. This is the famous inner voice that has been the subject of wide controversy. Some critics deprecate the authority of such an — to them — abstract and impracticable source and maintain that his decisions can thus seldom bear relation to realism. Let us examine the issue. The human conscience is a privileged possess on common to all although it varies in application. In the majority of us the still small voice within is silenced by the drone of our emotions sentiments prejudices environment convention etc. Our actions thus do not always enjoy a moral justification. But this we also do not always realise because the voice of our conscience has been rendered a whisper and has little opportunity to be

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heard It is left to a select few, *those who do not master their conscience but are mastered by it*, to act with moral consistency and maintain the desired standard of conduct These, like Gandhi are in a wilderness *And because we lack the strength and courage to simulate them we seek a convenient evasion by discrediting them and their faith*

Thus it may be that Gandhi's decisions and policies may surprise even his followers But to him there is only one path of action Circumstances must bow to principles He can never be an opportunist When in 1914 England unsheathed her sword against Germany 'to defend democracy,' Gandhi did not exploit the occasion for India's benefit *He did not render England's hour of distress India's hour of opportunity* Today, when a similar occasion has been created his policy is correspondingly similar "I protest with all the strength at my command," he maintains "that so far as I am concerned, I have no desire whatsoever to embarrass the British especially at a time when it is a question of life and death with them"

It must be conceded that, piloted by a policy such as this, the process of India's liberation will necessarily be slow Yet, it must likewise be conceded that the Master Mason is constructing the Foundation well, whereby the Structure that is to be will be a Mansion fit for the Gods Gandhi's India is destined to evolve into an institution that may well become the envy of and a pattern for other

"civilised" and "free countries" An honest effort is a virtual achievement Gandhi is honest And so he has already achieved

To Gandhi, nationalism at best is merely a means to an end, *and not an end in itself* To him nationalism is constructive, not destructive He does not desire India to be an aggressive plundering link in the chain of nations that today is engaged in a mighty clash of arms He desires India to be a free nation because *her political freedom will render possible her social and economic freedom*, such as will ensure the welfare of his people, who to him, are more important and precious as human beings than as Indians He is thus a political agitator because he is a social reformer To him, the daily bread for India's under-nourished millions is a national poem

Although "an incorrigible idealist," he does not merely hope and pray, but he works for, the emancipation of his country He is the great bridge between the mystical and the practical, the idealistic and the realistic As a saint and sage he does not betake himself to isolated regions by river and stream and there invoke heavenly succour for the hungry, thirsty and naked He is essentially *with* the crowd, *of* the crowd and *for* the crowd To him prayer is action and hope is success

In the spinning wheel, the hum of which has virtually become India's national anthem, he perceives the instru-

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ment of the country's economic salvation. By a country-wide occupation with this method of indigenous production, he hopes to establish a chain of self supporting, independent productive centres, which will ensure work and food for India's hungry unemployed. We can understand therefore, why, when Katherine Mayo, notorious for her "Mother India," solicited from him a message for America, he replied, "my message to America is the hum of this wheel."

It is surely the voice of the people we hear when Gandhi utters the following —

When all about me are dying for want of food the only occupation permissible for me is to feed the hungry. India is a house on fire. It is dying of hunger because it has no work to buy food with. Khulna is starving. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine. Orissa is a land suffering from chronic famine. India is growing daily poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care she will collapse altogether.

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To a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages God created man to work for his food and said that those who ate without work were thieves We must think of millions who today are less than animals almost in a dying state Hunger is the argument that is drawing India to the spinning wheel

The poet lives for the morrow, and would have us do likewise He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds in the early morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky Those birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown the previous night But I have had the pain of watching birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire For millions it is an eternal vigil or an

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eternal trance I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir

Give them work that they may eat ! ' Why should I, who have no need to work for food spin ? ' may be the question asked Because I am eating what does not belong to me I am living on the spoilation of my countrymen Trace the source of every coin that finds its way into your pocket and you will realise the truth of what I write Every one must spin Let Tagore spin like the others Let him burn his foreign clothes that is the duty today God will take care of the morrow As it says in the Gita *Do right !*

Nor is it sufficient satisfaction to Gandhi that his people have their daily bread they must also have their religious and social dignity and status To promote and to maintain these he arrays his moral forces not only against a foreign rule but also against those undesirable factors in Hinduism which permit and perpetrate the unholy act of untouchability Here Gandhi is revealed at his best as a humanitarian first and a Hindu next,

for to him truth is the greatest religion and the noblest attribute towards which man may aspire. He considers untouchability not only incomprehensible but also detestable. It is a stigma and an affliction polluting the fair name of religion. It must be destroyed, completely and mercilessly. In a strain of righteous indignation he states, "If the Indians have become the pariahs of the empire, it is retributive justice, meted out to us by a just God. Should we Hindus not wash our blood stained hands before we ask the English to wash theirs? Untouchability has degraded us, made us pariahs in South Africa, East Africa, Canada. So long as Hindus wilfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, so long *Swaraj* is impossible of attainment. India is guilty. England has done nothing blacker. The first duty is to protect the weak and helpless and never injure the feelings of any individual. We are no better than brutes until we have purged ourselves of the sins we have committed against our weaker brethren."

Gandhi's missionary labours in this direction have obviously evoked the displeasure of orthodox Hinduism, which cannot appreciate this revolt against an established custom. But to Gandhi the only master is conscience, and the only motive truth, the holy truth that to him assumes the form of a deity. To such like him public opinion indicates not propriety of action or otherwise but merely public thought. The voice of the ostracised and oppressed

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millions who are victims of this sullen custom is the only deciding force for Gandhi. It reaches his ears like a martial tune that stirs the great March for liberation.

When in 1933 he undertook a special country wide tour to propagate this liberation he evoked a tumultuous response and was everywhere received with a welcome the cordiality and spontaneity of which might well have been the envy of a monarch. Men and women with infants in their arms sat with patient expectation to see the great Gandhi pass by the streets of India. To them he appeared in the garb of a savior and a hero and for them he will ever remain a sacred monument enshrined in their heart. Not for them the controversy the doubt the misgivings about Gandhi that assail some sections of contemporary opinion. To them Gandhi is life and love and above all he is DIGNITY. To them he has restored their inherent but stolen status of exalted humanity. This indeed is the ultimate triumph of Gandhism the sublime end towards which his political social and economic activities are merely the means for *Gandhism in essence signifies the liberation, equality and self-realization of humanity*. Perhaps this is why Romain

well among them the determining of woman's status in relation to that of man. This zeal is reflected in political as well as social vocations for India's women of today are not only the equals of men in the domestic scene but they occupy important executive positions in the political machinery of the country. And how will the mere males of India react to this feminine emancipation? Will they resent the interference or applaud the salvation? Is the woman's world to be only the kitchen? Is she to be only the child bearer? Is she to be only man's paything and his instrument of delight? The eloquent and significant answers to these questions are to be found in women able and proud to share the joys and sorrows of their mate of a womanhood marching abreast with its men as standard bearers of a nation in the making marching through jail and legislature through tribulation and joy through blood and death onward ever onward to achievement victory and *realisation*. In Gandhi's India there is justice for all and in the shaping of the new national order and the new destiny India's womanhood is a resurrected force unveiled and unshackled destined to play an important—perhaps a decisive—part. Simply but eloquently Gandhi pays a tribute to all women when he states

Woman is not the weaker sex but the better half of humanity the nobler of the two for even today it is the embodiment of sacrifice silent suffering humanity faith and knowledge. Woman's intuition has often proved truer than man's arrogant assumption of knowledge.

A detailed analysis will convince the penetrating observer that by fashioning India's destiny on the basis of truth justice peace and equality Gandhi is ensuring her ultimate freedom and her ultimate salvation. This freedom will be a *creation* not a *conquest* for India is not fighting but *qualifying* for it. It will be an *internal purity* not an *external decoration*. In effect therefore India will possess virtual freedom when the process of purification is complete and the actual transference of Governmental power will be merely a political incident. Perhaps this conception of freedom will startle the complacency of the conventional patriot. Perhaps this freedom is not what is popularly conceived to be political independence but this is the only freedom that can endear itself to the discerning for its price is not eternal vigilance.

circumstantial necessity. It denotes not opportunism but an inviolable principle, presupposing not weakness but strength. If Gandhism is to be fulfilled, then non-violence suffers no alternative, for it is the ultimate and supreme attribute of enlightened and purified humanity.

To a world standing at the crossroads the signboard of this non-violence is of profound significance. Humanity today is lost in a labyrinth of its own construction. It seeks 'realism' and finds futility. War, with its paraphernalia of pacts and treaties, has proved and is proving its incapacity to solve the problems of man. Frustrated and disillusioned, he knocks frantically at other doors to escape from the halls of chaos and confusion. He attempts a great deal, but he achieves little, because he has taken the wrong turning, and is fast travelling towards his doom.

Much has been spoken and written about the contemplated world order. Such terms as a United States of the World, a Federated Europe, the Brotherhood of Man are now common phrases. Alas, these constitute but a symphony of words, with no beat to harmonise them into a concert of action and reality. We all cherish the end but we all lack the means. These means can be found not in churches and prayer-halls, not in organised international good will and fellowship, not in political theatricals and displays but individual efforts.

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Gandhism essentially implies an *evolution* towards rather than a *revolution against* wherefore for Gandhism non violence is an inevitable consummation and not a

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and labours for individual salvation culminating in a united effort for universal concord and association of ideals. World peace can never be an imposition from without. It must be a purifying impulse from within. It can never be *organised*. It *must be cultivated*.

The world is today in a state of moral and spiritual decay. It is the duty of every man, woman and child to attempt a cure. No field should be left unexplored, and if, at the end of our survey, we record no other success than it behoves us all to conscientiously concede that the answer to our prayer and indeed, our indispensable Ally in the great Battle, is Gandhism, the motivating power that is manifested in non violence.

If we are to ascertain, as we must, the nature and scope of this power, then we must approach the subject with no pre conceived notions, with no predilections, and above all, *without prejudice*.

To understand fully the implications of non-violence and the supplementing forces of non-co operation and renunciation, it will be necessary to perceive life through a new lens. We are the product more of environment, custom, tradition, convention and propaganda than of truth. To believe the real truth is distinguished from the manufactured truth a radical change of perspective is indispensable.

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Before we proceed to examine the potentialities of non violence it will perhaps be well to trace its origin to sources which influenced and inspired Gandhi to create it into a national force.

It has already been mentioned that Gandhi was profoundly influenced by the teachings of Tolstoy. In his Letter on Non Resistance the Russian sage presents his case forcefully as evidenced in the following extracts —

Christian teachings does not lay down laws for everybody and does not say to people You all for fear of punishment must obey such and such rules and then you will all be happy but it explains to each individual his position in relation to the world and lets him see what results for him individually inevitably flow from that relation Christianity says to man (and to each man separately) that his personal life can have no rational meaning if he counts it as belonging to himself or as having for its aim worldly happiness for himself or for other people This is so because the happiness he seeks is unattainable (1) because as all beings

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strive after worldly advantages, the gain of one is the loss of others, and it is most probable that each individual will incur much superfluous suffering in the course of his vain efforts to seize unattainable blessings, (2) because, even if a man get worldly advantages, the more he obtains the less they satisfy him and the more he hankers after fresh ones (3) and chiefly because the longer a man lives the more inevitable becomes the approach of old age, sickness and of death destroying all possibility of worldly advantages

So that if a man considers his life his own, to be spent in seeking worldly happiness for himself as well as for others than that life can have no rational explanation for him

Life has a rational meaning only when one understands that to consider our life our own or to see its aim in worldly happiness for ourselves or for other people is a delusion, that a man's life does not belong to

him who has received it, but to Him who has given it and its object should therefore be, not the attainment of worldly happiness either for one's self or for other individuals, but solely the fulfilment of the will of Him who created this life

This conception alone gives life a rational meaning and makes its aim (which is to fulfil the will of God) attainable. And, most important of all only when enlightened by this conception does man see clearly the right direction for his own activity. Man is then no longer destined to suffer and to despair, as was inevitable under the former conception.

'The universe and I in it', says to himself a man with this conception, 'exist by the will of God. I cannot know the whole of the universe (for in its immensity it transcends my comprehension), nor can I know my own position in it, but I do know with certainty what

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God who has sent me into the world (infinite in time and space and therefore incomprehensible to me), demands from me. This is revealed to me (1) by the collective wisdom of the best men who have gone before me & e by tradition (2) by my own reason and (3) by my heart & e by the highest aspiration of my nature

Tradition (the collective wisdom of our greatest fore runners) tells me that I should do unto others as I would that they should do unto me

My reason shows me that only by all men acting thus is the highest happiness for all men attainable

Only when I yield myself to that intuition of love which demands obedience to this law is my own heart happy and at rest. And not only can I then know how to act but I can and do discern the work to co-operate in which my activity was designed and is required

I cannot fathom God's whole design for the sake of which the universe exists and lives but the

Divine work which is being accomplished in this world and in which I participate by living is comprehensible to me

This work is the annihilation of discord and strife among men and among all creatures and the establishment of the highest unity and concord and love

It is the fulfilment of the promises of the Hebrew prophet who foretold a time when all men should be taught by truth when spears should be turned into reaping hooks swords be beaten to ploughshares and the lion lie down with the lamb

So that a man of Christian intelligence not only knows what he has to do but he also understands the work he is doing

He has to act so as to co-operate towards the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth For this a man must obey his intuition of God's will & he must act lovingly

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towards others, as he would that others should act towards him

Thus the intuitive demands of man's soul coincide with the external aim of life which he sees before him

According to Christian teaching, man in this world is God's labourer. A labourer does not know his master's whole design, but he does know the immediate object which he is set to work at. He receives definite instructions what to do, and especially what not to do, lest he binder the attainment of the very aims towards which his labour should tend. For the rest he has full liberty given him. And therefore, for a man who has grasped the Christian conception of life, the meaning of his life is perfectly plain and reasonable nor can he have a moment's hesitation as to *how* he should act, or *what* he should do to fulfil the object for which he lives.

And yet in spite of such a twofold indication (clear and indubitable

to a man of Christian understanding) of what is the real aim and meaning of human life, and of what men should do and should not do, we find people (and people calling themselves Christians) who decide that, in such and such circumstances, men ought to abandon God's law and reason's guidance and to act in opposition to them because (according to their conception) the effects of actions performed in submission to God's law may be detrimental or inconvenient

The substance and implication of the above is obvious. All religions worthy of the name must essentially and fundamentally be based on non violence. Non violence is the supreme test of religion. The Great Law is inviolable and inexorable and *can never become subservient to circumstances or mundane matters*. When so-called religion accepts violence in any shape or form or for any reason whatsoever then it becomes a negation of itself, it defeats its purpose and loses its intrinsic value. There can be no compromise with truth. The commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill" is not amended by a sub-commandment stipulating that "Thou Shalt Kill Only When Necessary," or "Thou Shalt Kill In War." Indeed,

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the very uniformity and consistency of non violence is its major asset for as such it does not permit the saint and the killer to interpret it according to their office respectively

The other deduction we may draw from the above quotation is that true and lasting happiness must ultimately be based on non violence This also signifies that true religion, as distinct from the dogma and ceremonial that have little spiritual value, must dwell in every house and in every heart It is scarcely sufficient or expedient to flaunt our Sunday best and walk churchwards and back again with little gained save the exercise of the walk To pray is good *but to act with the same intent is better*, to act not only to avoid violence, but also to create conditions favourable for non violence which is prayer 'n action This indeed, is happiness To speak and act with reason, not emotion, to live with God, not Mammon, to seek the spiritual, not the material to forgive, and not to avenge to give, and not to take ' Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God And His Righteousness, And All These Things Shall Be Added Unto You "

Thoughts like these have little attraction for the thrill seeker They lack a spectacular complex and glamour, and they *apparently* lack realism To the all seeing, however, appearances deceptive can never conceal truth, who rewards her followers with all her treasures Human

happiness subsists on something more than merely food, and drink and clothing. Man in the flesh is a dwarf, man in his Destiny is a giant. This Destiny can never be realised through violence but by service, service that tends towards active association with Love—the great Conqueror. To seek happiness of the flesh and for the flesh is to chase a mirage. We, therefore, who profess to seek realism are indeed refugees from that which we seek. Yes, we are refugees from realism pathetically seeking shelter in a fantasy of mirth and aimless gaiety. Like children at a party in a new house we run hither and thither, making violence a creed and courting futility and shadows as our portion. Some of these "children" come to this party with something on their head, which men call crowns. These are 'great' rulers and "mighty" emperors who come with a clutter of arms and a flutter of flags. They come. And then they go, vanishing beneath the very dust they raise, to retreat into oblivion. Yet one kingdom, the Kingdom of Calvary still lives, despite successive attacks by Satanic Hosts, and its King still reigns, because he wears a crown of thorns and because to build his Kingdom *he did not take the blood of others but gave his own*.

The Crucifixion of Christ represents supreme renunciation, and therefore his ultimate glory. This lends colour to the theory that *when man renounces all he achieves all*, investing himself with a moral grandeur that by far surpasses all earthly sways and kingly glories.

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Non-violence in practice requires renunciation as a qualification, which being the case we may comprehend why man loses all through violence and gains all through non violence. Hence it is easy to understand why Gandhi is one of the most powerful revolutionaries in the history of man, wielding a weapon that is invincible.

This weapon is not attainable by the scratch of a pen at any time by anybody. Its acquisition must be cultivated, necessitating a period of training and study that might test the patience and optimism of many. This explains why Gandhi directs a country wide training of volunteers whose efficiency and qualifications alone will decide the issue of a struggle. He himself provides a comprehensive catalogue of these qualifications in the following which are his thoughts on the Gita. It may interest the reader to know that it was written during one of his periods in jail.

If we try to understand from all possible points of view, and so continuously meditate on the Gita we must become one with it. As for myself, I run to my mother Gita whenever I find myself in difficulties, and up to now she has never failed to comfort me. It is possible that

those who are getting comfort from the Gita may get a greater help, and see something altogether new, if they come to know the way in which I understand it from day to day

The twelfth chapter of the Gita tells of Bhaktiyoga — realization of God through Devotion. At the time of marriage we ask the bridal couple to learn this chapter by heart and meditate upon it, as one of the fine sacrifices to be performed. Apart from Devotion, Action and Knowledge are cold and dry, and may even become shackles. So with the heart full of love let us approach this meditation on the Gita. Arjuna asks of the Lord, "Which is the better of the two, the devotee who worships the Manifest, or the one who worships the Unmanifest?" The Lord says in reply "Those who meditate upon the Manifest in full faith, and lose themselves in Me, those faithful ones are my devotees. But those who worship the Unmanifest, and in order to do so

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restrain all their senses, looking upon and serving all alike, regarding none as high or low, those also realize Me "

So it cannot be affirmed that one way is superior to the other. But it may be regarded as impossible for an embodied being fully to comprehend and adore the Unmanifest. The Unmanifest is without attributes and beyond the reach of human vision. Therefore all embodied beings consciously or unconsciously are devotees of the Manifest. 'So,' saith the Lord, 'let thy mind be merged in My Universal Body which has form. Offer thy all at his feet. But if thou canst not do this, practise the restraint of passions of thy mind. By observing *Yama* and *Niyama* with the help of *Pranayama*, *Asan* and other practices bring the mind under control. If thou canst do thus then perform all thy works with this in mind, that whatever work thou undertaketh thou doest it all for My sake. Thus thy worldly infatuations and attachments will fade away, and Love will rise in thee.'

But if thou canst not do even this, then renounce the fruit of all thy actions yearn no more after the fruit of thy work Ever do that work which falls to thy lot Man cannot be master over the fruit of his work The fruit of work appears only after causes have combined to form it Therefore be thou only the instrument Do not regard as superior or inferior any of these four methods which I have shown unto thee Whatever in them is suitable for thee that make use of in the practice of devotion "

It seems that the path of hearing, meditating and comprehending may be easier than the path of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Pranayama* and *Asan* Easier than this may be concentration and worship Again, easier than concentration may be renunciation of the fruit of works The same method cannot be equally easy for everyone, some may have to turn for help to all these methods They are certainly intermingled In any case, the Lord says, "Thou wishest to be a devotee

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Achieve that goal by whatever method thou canst My part is simply to tell thee whom to count a true devotee A devotee hates no one, bears no grudge against anyone, befriends all creatures, is merciful to all To accomplish this, he eliminates all personal attachments his selfishness is dissolved and he becomes as nothing for him grief and happiness are one He forgives those who trespass against himself, as he hungers for forgiveness from the world for his own faults He dwells in contentment, and is firm in his good resolves He surrenders to Me in his mind, his intellect, his all He never causes in other beings trouble or fear, himself knowing no trouble or fear through others My devotee is free from joy or sorrow, pleasure and pain He has no desires, but is pure, skilful and wise He has renounced all ambitious undertakings He stands by his resolves, renouncing their good or bad fruit and he remaining unconcerned Such an one knows not enemies and is beyond honour or disgrace

" In peace and silence, contented with whatever may come his way, he lives inwardly as if alone and always remains calm no matter what may be going on around him One who lives in this manner, full of faith, he is My Beloved Devotee '

Fearlessness is an essential for the growth of other noble qualities How can one seek Truth or cherish Love without fearlessness? As Pritam has it The path of Hari (the Lord) is the path of the brave and not of cowards Hari here means truth, and the brave are those armed with fearlessness, not with the sword, the rifle and other carnal weapons, which are affected only by cowards

Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear—fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dis- possession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on One who over- comes the fear of death does not surmount all other fears, as is commonly but erroneously supposed

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Some of us do not fear death, but flee from the minor ills of life. Some are ready to die themselves, but cannot bear their loved ones to be taken away from them. Some misers will put up with all this, will part even with their lives, but not with their property, others will do any number of black deeds in order to uphold their supposed prestige. Some will swerve from the straight and narrow path, which lies clear before them simply because they are afraid of incurring the world's odium.

The seeker after truth must conquer all these fears. He should be ready to sacrifice his all in the quest of truth even as Harischandra did. The story of Harischandra may be only a parable, but every seeker will bear witness to its truth for his personal experience, and therefore that story is infinitely more precious than any historical fact whatever, and we would do well to ponder over its moral. Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies the height

of freedom from delusions. But one can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour and by increasing confidence in oneself. As I have stated at the very outset, we must give up external fears.

As for the internal foes we must ever walk in their fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger, and the like. External fears cease of their own accord, when once we have conquered these traitors within the camp. All fears revolve round the body as a centre and would therefore disappear as soon as one got rid of the attachment of the body.

We thus find that all fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family, and for the body. Wealth, the family and the body will be there, just the same, we have only to change our attitude to them. All these are not ours but

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God's Nothing whatever in this world is ours Even we ourselves are his Why, then should we entertain any fears?

The Upanishad, therefore, directs us "to give up attachment for things while we enjoy them" That is to say, we must be interested in them not as proprietors but as only trustees He, on whose behalf we hold them, will give us strength and the weapons requisite for defending them against all comers When we thus cease to be masters and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the very dust under our feet all fears will roll away like mists we shall attain ineffable peace and see Satyanarayan (the God of Truth) face to face

Man's delight in renunciation differentiates him from the beasts Some demur that life thus understood becomes dull and devoid of art, and leaves no room for the householder But these critics fail to grasp the true meaning of renunciation which does

not mean abandoning the world and retiring into the forest, but rather the infusion of the spirit of self sacrifice into all the activities of life

The life of a householder may take the colour either of indulgence or renunciation. A merchant who does his work in a sacrificial spirit will have large sums of money passing through his hands every day but his thoughts will be entirely devoted to service. He will not cheat or speculate but will lead a simple life. He will not injure a living soul but will lose millions rather than do any harm.

Let no one run away with the idea that this type of merchant only exists in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it is represented in the West as well as in the East. It is true such merchants may be counted on one's fingers but the type ceases to be imaginary as long as even one living specimen can be found to answer to it.

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If we go deeply into the matter we shall come across men in every walk of life who lead dedicated lives. No doubt these men of sacrifice obtain their livelihood by their work. But livelihood is not their objective; it is only the by product of their vocation. Motilal was a tailor at first and continued as a tailor afterwards. But his spirit was changed and his work was transmuted into worship. He began to think about the welfare of others and his life became artistic in the highest sense of the term.

A life of sacrifice is a pinnacle of art and is full of true joy which ever renews itself. A man is never surfeited with it and the spring of interest is inexhaustible. Indulgences lead to destruction. Renunciation leads to immortality. Enjoyment has no independent existence. It depends upon our attitude towards life. One man will enjoy theatrical scenery, another the ever new scenes which unfold themselves in the sky. Enjoyment therefore is a matter of

individual and national education. We enjoy things which we have been taught to enjoy as children

Again many self sacrificing people imagine that they are free to receive in return everything they need and many things they do not need because they are rendering disinterested service Directly this idea sways a man he ceases to be a servant and becomes a tyrant over the people

One who would serve will not waste a thought upon his own comforts which he leaves to be attended to or neglected by his Master on high He will not therefore encumber himself with everything that comes his way, he will take only what he strictly needs and leave the rest He will be calm, free from anger and unruffled in mind, even if he finds himself put to great difficulty His service, like virtue, is its own reward and he will rest content

Again, one dare not be very neglectful in service or be behind

India and the world from damnation to salvation? Would all this be possible if renunciation was merely a formless ideal having its being in the icy altitudes of the Himalayas where seldom if ever does mortal foot tread the wastes? If it be argued that Gandhi is a saint and that therefore his possibilities are our impossibilities then it can also be argued that he is a human being like all other humans and that therefore what is possible for him is also possible for us if we like him become practical idealists and instead of endeavouring to idealise realities we realise ideals.

The truly great leader and reformer never hesitates to practise what he preaches. When Gandhi preaches renunciation *he is the first to practise it*. If India's millions are ill clad and ill fed then Gandhi himself associates himself with his suffering countrymen completely renouncing all. Thus his loin cloth his frugal diet his hut devoid of almost all furniture etc. assume a new perspective a perspective of simple beauty and infinite glory. To a humanity clamouring for symbols Gandhi symbolises the poverty of the masses and also the *grandeur of poverty*. We perceive in his simplicity a faithful association with the Law of Renunciation and though we

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hand with it He who thinks that one must be diligent only in one's personal business and that unpaid public business may be done in any way and at any time has still to learn the rudiments of renunciation. Voluntary service where others demand the best must take precedence over service of self. In fact the pure devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation whatever.

The pronounced materialist and realist will find little to convince him in such Himalayan Idealism.

Stop dreaming we are told and face facts. We live in a world of realities. Thoughts like these are all right but they can never be more than just thoughts noble thoughts no doubt but just thoughts.

It is maintained therefore in effect that Gandhism can never emerge from the confines of books and bear any aspect of realism. Alas for the so called realists! Of what use is gold if it is ever to be concealed in a gold mine? Of what use is an ideal if it is not inherently associated with realism? Of what use is Gandhism if it be not actively responsible for solving our problems for healing the wounds of the battered and bruised for leading

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to pray " For the masses, however, Gandhi is more than a symbol he is a saviour They do not merely admire him, they worship him Having almost defied the object of their adoration, they have conferred upon him the appellation of *Mahatma* (Great Soul), and *Bapu* (Father)

Gandhi's renunciation and his subsequent simplicity is an eloquent testimony of a great truth The majority of mankind lives amidst a plenty that is its own destruction From the earliest times Man has been engaged in the Great Hunt, whereby he has been seeking the materials required for his sustenance and welfare Having obtained the necessities, however, the Great Hunt continued, until the Hunter was unable to distinguish between the necessary and the unnecessary The result has been a virtual tragedy Necessities apparently flourished but actually deteriorated into luxuries and superfluities which, in turn, have developed into man's burden financial, moral and mental Thus it is that the 'fortunate' among us are over-fed, over-clothed, and being in possession of a great deal more than what should belong to us, we are over anxious, *lest we lose what we have* Around us are heard with their echo and re-echo the moanful wails of the hungry, the thirsty and the naked. These voices we hear, but we do not heed them, because if we heed, than we must give, and we are afraid to give Hence the chronic ills of inequality and social irregularities that exact a heavy toll from erring man Those who have attempt to retain'

what they have *at all costs* and if the cost is violence the violence is considered to be a duty. Those who have not fight to procure what they should have and likewise resort to violence as an inevitable alternative. Thus rages the great conflict manifested in wars when nations resort to carnage and annihilation either to retain or to obtain while the angels weep because both the means and the end are tragic futilities. And when a Good Samaritan traversing the long and lonely way seeks to cure the afflictions of man by giving and not taking those who watch call the actor an unreal idealist and the action an unreal ideal.

He who gave us mouth will give us food says Gandhi and therefore to fight that we may eat is an illogical scheme of being which is doomed to die ere its birth for behold the likes of the field. They toil not neither do they spin yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

When therefore we renounce that which we do not require and should not possess we renounce to a considerable extent the evil of violence and automatically ensure our happiness for no man is so unhappy as he who has the most—to lose.

This will explain why all programmes of world peace and universal goodwill formulated without any change

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being effected in the existing financial economic and social conditions are destined to fail for without renunciation as a creed in practice there cannot possibly be non violence as an instrument and without non violence there can certainly be no peace in any sense of the term

Nor is it sufficient to abjure violence merely in the physical form If countries are not at war or if one does not indulge in street fights there is no justification to maintain that there is peace Non violence is not a *negative* but a *positive* attribute It does not merely denote the absence of violence but the presence also of that love and goodwill which seeks and finds its pleasure and privilege in SERVICE This demands non violence not only in action but also in word and thought We can imagine therefore the incongruity and inconsistency of Mr A who on returning home from a house of prayer where he had solemnly sworn before the altar of heaven to seek and preserve peace with all unhesitatingly begins to quarrel with his neighbour because of the non payment of a debt Mr B having attended a peace conference where amidst a generous display of emotion he eloquently pleaded with thumping of table the sacred duty of all to avoid war he returns home tired and promptly proceeds to start a little war himself with his wife because his food is cold Both these pacifists loudly protest their innocence of any violence insisting that there has been no physical damage Alas is not action merely the expression of thought?

And are not words the expressions of thoughts also? What, therefore is the difference between violent thoughts being expressed in words or in deeds? The damage caused by both seldom differ and as both denote the absence of love and goodwill the violence of one does certainly not differ from the violence of the other. All actions spring from thoughts and if our actions and our words are to be non violent then our thoughts must also be non violent wherefore it is imperative that we be actuated by instincts of love service and self sacrifice without which peace individual communal national or international will ever remain a dream and a myth.

How is it possible to translate the principle of non violence into practice? Is it possible to preserve the principle against grave provocation? Is non violence possible when we are oppressed and persecuted by tyrants who rule with violence? Is it not essential for non violence to be preceded by the golden age when all will be uniformly garbed as saints? These are some of the questions hurled at Gandhi by his scoffing critics and the replies he tenders will make an interesting study.

Non violence as an instrument of action gains its utmost utility precisely when it is erroneously conceived to be a blunt weapon i.e. against the provocation of an adversary whose conduct is violent for of what use is light if it is not to banish darkness? And does not a light

the Himalayas must give what rest they can to my bleeding soul "

He offers further illustration of the case of non-violence in the following utterances —

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. Non violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer but the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

Suffering is the mark of the human tribe. It is an eternal law. The mother suffers so that her child may live. Life comes out of death. The condition of wheat growing is that the seed grain should perish. No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of

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shine brightest when darkness is greatest ? Non-violence among saints is a negligible and insignificant attribute, because it does not involve the virtue of restraint and love. When in action against forces of violence it is the most potential weapon known to man, and, if manipulated correctly, is virtually invincible. Here it is necessary to state that, contrary to popular conception, non violence does not imply unresisting submission to the will of an adversary, but merely the attainment of the objective without the agency of any injury, physical, mental or moral. Also, the adherent of non violence, in common with a soldier of violence must be possessed of infinite courage, strength, powers of endurance and the capacity to suffer, thus completely refuting the imputation that non violence is merely the last resort of the coward. Indeed non-violence demands greater heroism than violence for while the latter is the convenient expression of him whose weakness is mastered by his base passions, the former is a testimony of the strength of self restraint. India will not be non violent when she is weak but when she is strong — strong to love and to serve. ' If India made violence her creed " states Gandhi. " I would not care to live in India. She would cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion. I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast, because I feel that she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. If she were to fail me I would feel like an orphan, without hope of ever finding a guardian. Then the snowy altitudes of

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suffering. It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone. The purer the suffering the greater is the progress.

Non violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering.

I have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self sacrifice, the law of suffering. The *Rishis* who discovered the law of non violence in the midst of violence were greater geniuses than Newton, greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that salvation lay not through violence but through non violence. The religion of non violence is not meant merely for the *Rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The dignity of man requires obedience to

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heroism and chivalry, wherefore it ravages and deceives the world in an evil guise Under these auspices, when Gandhi proclaims a new weapon of realisation scepticism and even ridicule in the initial stages are perhaps inevitable Nevertheless if we can make a tradition and a custom of violence there is no reason whatsoever why we cannot make a tradition and a custom of non violence, if we are convinced that as a weapon *it can be effective in practice*

Non violence does not necessarily presage a uniformity of thought and action Differences of opinion there may be and conflict is thus inevitable *But non-violence decrees that there shall be conflict not of personalities but of principles* We may hate an idea but not its author And if this idea belongs to a tyrant, who seeks to impose it upon us through violence then we may resist the idea, by passive resistance which, in effect, means a non-acceptance of the idea and its subsequent violation, countenancing the consequences of our action with undeviating firmness and unflinching heroism Thus is created a situation wherein two units are in opposition The unit possessing greater material strength if it is the tyrannous one will seek to destroy the unit that violates its dictation But this it will not do if the passive resistance continues its opposition, for it is a scientific law that violence only continues and increases in proportion to the violence encountered, and decreases in

proportion to the non-violence in opposition. Hence, for the non-violent, victory is only a matter of time.

Suppose on the other hand there is a conflict in which both the parties concerned resort to violence. The so called victor by defeating the vanquished has created an adversary whose sole aim is henceforth to develop sufficient strength to reverse the situation and to defeat the victor. Thus violence begets more violence and can never become an instrument of realisation and salvation for it destroys everything and accomplishes nothing.

In distinct contrast, non violence offers a double advantage "It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes." By offering passive resistance to the action and love and goodwill to the actor, the non violent ensure the vindication of their cause and create not an enemy but a friend, for the ultimate effect of non violence is not to condemn but to convert. Love is by far a greater conqueror than force, and, by the operation of the common law of cause and effect, the action of love and goodwill must inevitably and invariably result in the reaction of love and goodwill, as was instanced in Gandhi's historical trial of 1922. Unflinching, resolute, brave, the great "prisoner" faced his judge with a demonstration of non violence that could not but evoke a similar attitude. "I do not ask for mercy", he said "I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore,

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comparatively democratic and tolerant, suggesting that this method of revolt would have been ineffective if the country would have been subjected to the blood and iron policy of dictatorship

To reason thus is to betray a gross ignorance of the fundamental implication of non violence, *which derives its strength not from the weakness of the opponent but from the righteousness of a just cause* While conceding that if the opponent is a manifestation of tyranny and cruelty the purpose of the non violent one will be delayed it must be admitted that by this it will not necessarily be defeated The difference is not one of kind but of degree for all must ultimately succumb to the laws of truth and love which give non violence its potent force

There is no power on earth that can imprison or curb that which is destined to be free Where the woodman's axe falls, there the foliage is most profuse The key that unlocks man from all prisons is his own righteousness Gandhi in prison is a grotesque illusion To intimidate him with threats or blows is to court the impossible, for in accordance with the requirements of *Satyagraha* (truth force), which is the shield of the non-violent, the following attributes, enunciated by Gandhi himself, are necessary

For the vindication of Truth, a *Satyagrahi* can only depend on truth-

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to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you Judge is either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty.

Mr Gandhi said the judge you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the charges, nevertheless what remains namely the determination of a just sentence is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life. But it is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law. There are probably few people in India who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any Government to leave you at liberty. But it is so. I am trying to balance what is due to you against what appears to me to be necessary in the interest of the public.

If the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you no one will be better pleased than I.

Some of Gandhi's critics assert that his passive resistance has only been possible because India's rulers are

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force, he may not depend on truth and force. To resort to Satyagraha because of the impossibility or undesirability of resorting to violence is wrong. A Satyagrahi, on the contrary, must have greater valour than the soldier on the battlefield, for physical bravery may be the result of an impulse but a Satyagrahi must be prepared by long discipline for the fight he has not only to wrestle with the external world but the internal enemies also. Compared with Satyagraha physical bravery is as a straw.

A Satyagrahi must never run after money. There is an eternal conflict between truth and wealth. This does not mean that a Satyagrahi can never have any money with him. A Satyagrahi is never the slave of money. If, in the pursuit of Truth, he happens to get money, well and good. If however there is a conflict, a Satyagrahi will take not a minute to decide in favour of Truth. A Satyagrahi has to fight with injustice,

supported by the powers that be. How is it possible for him to keep money when fighting with the defenders of injustice? The Government or the King can only control men and women through threats of controlling (confiscating) their property. Under these circumstances it is possible to keep money only for those who will support tyranny. A Satyagrahi shall have to prefer poverty.

It is true that even those who depend on physical bravery have often to accept poverty. Even they have to suffer hardships. Even they have to rise above the petty attachment to their families. During the Anglo Boer War the Boers had to do all this. The one thing which distinguishes Satyagraha from the sacrifice and sufferings of those who depend upon brute force is that while for a Satyagrahi there is no defeat those who depend on physical valour cannot always be sure of victory. The slight successes of the Boers so elated them that they carried the

morahty, of suffering, of sacrifice God and God only must be the sheet-anchor of a Satyagrahi How then can he be defeated?

In our present struggle, the principal test of a Satyagrahi is readiness to go to gaol. Hundreds of persons readily admit the necessity of going to gaols. Why are they not able to accept gaol life? Because they lack the above essential qualities of a Satyagrahi. There are many minor qualities also which a Satyagrahi intent on courting arrest and imprisonment must have. He must be a man of simple habits, content with the simplest food and the coarsest bed. He must have perfect control over his habits and he must have patience and faith. No false pride must he have.

A coward can never be a Satyagrahi. Persons of weak and delicate health also tire of gaol life. If we expect the very few persons, who in spite of extreme physical debility have withstood the rigours

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required to do the work of a scavenger in gaols. The moment we are sent to gaol we begin to count our days. When outside the walls of prison we allow years to pass listlessly. Why should then we employ ourselves in counting our days in gaol only? The reason is we dislike being in gaols. Really speaking we must consider it a privilege and a good fortune to be in gaols. We should deem it an honour

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A basic function of Satyagraha is non-compliance with the will of the oppressor. This feature more commonly known as non co-operation is as has been mentioned earlier a vital factor in the practice of non violence for through it alone is it possible to resist the aggressor without inflicting damage of life or limb. Non-co-operation fundamentally implies action *away from* rather than *towards and against*. In this perspective it may be termed to be negative action as vast in scope and effect as positive action. Here in order to evaluate fully the nature

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and power of non co-operation it is perhaps necessary to outline the nature and power of co-operation, which is the essence of creation

Life in all its phases and aspects consists of a series of dependencies and interconnections. No element is singular or unconnected in purpose or action. One element exists and functions by aid of the other. The plant is a growth of its root the root is utilised by the soil and the soil subsists on irrigation. The component parts of the human body when in harmony produce natural health but when a single organ is disturbed or damaged then the entire human body is affected and the result is illness.

Each human being in turn like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle must function in reference to specific laws if the Bits are to produce the Complete Design. When a single piece is absent or damaged then the Picture is incomplete and does not fulfil its purpose.

For existence to be harmonious and in concord therefore co-operation is indispensable. All our activities social, commercial, religious, political and economic, progress or retrogression according to the application or otherwise of the law of co-operation.

If therefore it is necessary to co-operate with forces of construction it is equally necessary to withhold co-

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operation from forces of destruction Hence the necessity and purpose of NON CO OPERATION which can thus be conceived to be a positive attribute and an instrument of welfare and salvation

So much for the nature and necessity of non co operation What of its effect? Does it serve the desired purpose? If so how does it do so?

Perhaps the best example can be furnished by Gandhi himself When he considered it necessary to express dis approval of existing legislation systems and methods he protested without striking a single blow but by withdrawing all association and co operation from the offending party When in 1921 India was crying out aloud for her birthright of freedom and at the unfavourable period thus created the then Prince of Wales set foot on her shores Gandhi appealed to his countrymen to abstain from extending a welcome to the Royal visitor When a law appears to be harsh Gandhi unceremoniously proceeds to violate it and bears the consequences with the heroism of a martyr When he considers foreign product usurping the markets of India's native products he appeals to his followers to picket foreign cloth sellers and to prevent its sale Students vacate schools and colleges lawyers and judges leave their courtroom industrialists stop the hum of commerce and in short civic life is paralysed and rendered incapable of normal

and thus exacts from him undue adherence to the will of the fasting person, which is tantamount to violent action

This, however, is not the purpose of fasting, nor is it in accordance with the laws of non-violence, which seeks to exact not *un* *due* but *due* adherence, not necessarily to the will of the non violent, but in conformation with the requirements of truth and justice. Hence, before one undertakes to convert his opponent by self suffering (of which the fast is but one method) he must ascertain that his cause is true and just. Only thus can he evoke that sympathy and moral support that are necessary for a non-violent victory. If for instance, a highway robber, instead of apprehending his victim at the point of a gun, threatened to fast or in any other manner impose self suffering unless the traveller parted with his gold, that action *would* actually be tantamount to violent coercion, for the object of the action would be devoid of a moral flavour and would be a criminal offence, certainly bearing no relation to truth or justice. The purpose of the fast is defeated if it is abused and prostituted for dishonest ends. Its basic function is to dispel arrogance, obduracy and injustice, and by presenting a pathetic picture of humility, self-sacrifice and heroism, to convert the opponent *not by force but by truth*.

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function. In vain does the law unveil its gallery of horrors and requisition first persuasion, then threats, then blows, and even prison. With non co-operation as a weapon and non violence as a shield, the army of revolt marches on ceaselessly and with gathering success, until final victory. With co-operation man finds his supreme purpose and method of happiness. But sometimes he also does so with non co-operation, provided that the end and the means thereof are just, true, necessary and practised by those who utilise the method not as an expedient or an evasion, but as an absolute principle, knowing no alternative, and possessed of the strength and courage to suffer all in order that they may achieve all.

The purpose and effect of non co-operation is manifested in the FAST, Gandhi's characteristic instrument of action that has been a subject of comment and controversy ranging from unbounded admiration to scathing criticism. Indeed, some quarters have not hesitated to brand the practice as violence in the guise of non violence.

What, however, can actually be the nature and motive of fasting? Fundamentally it is self deprivation negative action directed towards the attainment of the object without injuring the opponent. Hence it is strictly non-violent. But, assert the critics, by embarrassing the opponent, fasting compels him to act contrary to his will,

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Gandhi sometimes resorts to the fast not only to convert but also to purify. The sins of his countrymen

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leave a deep scar on his moral sensitivity, and exact from him the penitence that should be theirs. Like a wise parent who protects his offspring with his own body, Gandhi bears the cross, for those "who know not what they do" "I must undergo personal cleaning" he states "I must become a fitter instrument, able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have deeper truth and humanity. For me there is nothing so cleansing as a fast. A fast undertaken for fuller self expression for attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution."

The results of these "personal cleansings" have themselves been a tribute to the man and the method. Penitent and impressed, the elements of violence and injustice have succumbed to the infinite power of humility and love proving without reservations that the combination of non violence, non cooperation and renunciation is an invincible force.

"Blessed Are The Meek, For They Shall Inherit The Earth"

Man is propelled by his idea by which he may progress or retrogress according to whether the idea is constructive or destructive Ideas inspire men who in their turn inspire ideas Thus revolves the wheel of life

The greatest idea is Truth enabling and inspiring man to live the true life And what asked Pontius Pilate, is Truth? What indeed echo and re echo the Pilates of our age in mocking refrain is the true life? The cynic observes that might is right and Truth is found with the sword The materialist affirms that Truth is wealth, and that the true life is the life of gold and silver Justice is outraged, wails the oppressed and Truth is fled to brutish beasts," for he who has power has the key to successs, and, apparently lives the true life

Thus continues the babble of voices and in this profusion of make belief and delusion, glimmering like an oasis in a desert, sings the voice of the prophet proclaiming

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that Truth the real Truth is such as the Kingdom of Heaven is made of and that the true life is found more often in a hut than in a palace

What then is this Truth that is the Great Idea ? Longfellow provides the answer in his significant lines —

Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way
But to act that each tomorrow
Finds us farther than today

The true life is the life that is dedicated to service love and charity acts which establish oneness with God The Kingdom of God is within us within each one of us be he a beggar or a king rich or poor To seek this Kingdom and to be Monarchs thereof that indeed is the true life

Forces of destruction there are admittedly but against the fortress of Truth these forces lash their fury in vain Truth is like a winged creature soaring high above the howling wolves that hourly seek its destruction It is imperishable When the Roman soldiers nailed Truth to the Cross they sought to destroy it Actually they ensured its triumph for the persecution of Truth is the growth of Truth acting upon it even as water acts upon a

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plant sustaining and vitalising it Let the orphans and the widows dry their tears therefore and take comfort Let the hungry and the naked seek succour by identification with Truth and they will find the Power which doth the ravens feed and which will feed them too

To Gandhi Truth appears and speaks in clear terms Truth for him is love for all creatures or Ahimsa and the true life is that which expresses this love in non violence His own interpretation of Truth is as follows —

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth And if every page of these chapters (his autobiography) does not proclaim that the only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa I shall deem all my pains in writing these chapters to have been in vain And even though my effort in this behalf might prove fruitless it is the vehicle not the great principle that is at fault After all however sincere my strivings after Ahimsa might have been they have still been imperfect and inadequate The little fleeting glimpses therefore that I have been able to obtain of

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Truth can hardly convey an idea of its indescribable lustre a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest gleam of that mighty Effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa.

To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics, and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification, without self purification

the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream. God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity a man has to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion, and to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity in spite of ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed, it very often stings me. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms. Ever since my return to India I have had experience of the dormant passions lying hidden within

me. The knowledge of them has made me feel humiliated but not defeated. The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy. But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility.

The great Idea of Truth has revealed to Gandhi that the only hope in an otherwise hopeless world is the true life as expressed in non violence non violence in thought word and deed. If humanity is to survive then there is no alternative to the true life. We must make our choice and determine our own destiny. Either we continue making a virtue of self deception and by being our own treacherous enemies perish by our own hands or we accept truth and non violence unconditionally and unreservedly. Too long have men shed their blood and women their tears. Too long have we sought to find in bloody combat that which is only possible through love and charity. All our resources have been mobilised hitherto in order to kill and be killed henceforth they should be mobilised in order to save and be saved. Thus

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this darkness and bidding us to be of good cheer, for, they tell us, there is joy and happiness everlasting for those who will go unto them. But we do not go unto them, for these lights radiate from the Cross and from the Spinning-Wheel. And when we see them we are afraid, and cannot heed their call, perceiving in them not strength but weakness.

Let us, dear reader end this long, dark night, and herald the new Dawn. Christs and Gandhis can but show us how and why. And we must believe — and follow, not with weakness but with strength, not cowardice but heroism for this will be the Army of the Brave.

There can be no happiness if there is not world peace, and world peace is impossible without non-violence.

A triumphant Gandhi and a liberated India will not be merely political events, they will be a moral revolution, for with Gandhism humanity stands or falls, and if it stands, then non violence ceases to be an ideal and it becomes a reality.

In the words of Theodore Herzl, "if you will it, it is not a dream."

And it must not be a dream, for the sun must shine in the heavens, the birds must sing on the trees and flowers must grow on the fields. So we must will it.

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for their Cross is also our Cross. There is no escape for any of the untruthful and salvation comes to all who make Truth their creed — in action

For two thousand years man has stood at the foot of the Cross and watched the Silent Figure with reverence and prayer. But there has been prayer only on his lips, not in his heart. While he has stood with one hand clasped on his breast, in the other hand there has been a sword — stained with the blood of his slain brother. This is the hand that should have held instead the hand of a fellow mortal held it in love and friendship, for a "forelorn and shipwrecked brother". Alas Christianity has failed because it has not yet deciphered the message of Christ, which is to take love and charity from the pages of the Bible and institute it as the Law of Man in *all* his dealings with *all* his fellow creatures

Our burnt-offering must be our sincere endeavours towards the true life, and our reward will be our own achievement

• Man destroys with his passions, with his reason he creates. Today his passion is igniting the world, and the conflagration threatens to consume all. Whatever we touch, we find ashes in our hands, wherever we tread there the earth crumbles beneath our feet. Life seems to be one long night. Sometimes there shine lights, piercing

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this darkness and bidding us to be of good cheer, for, they tell us, there is joy and happiness everlasting for those who will go unto them. But we do not go unto them, for these lights radiate from the Cross and from the Spinning-Wheel. And when we see them we are afraid, and cannot heed their call perceiving in them not strength but weakness.

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